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The American Roots of German Lutheranism in Illinois

E. DUANE ELBERT

The popular image of religion on the Illinois frontier is of a beleagured but undaunted circuit rider bringing the Christian gospel to Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians. Few historians mention the role played by American-born Lutheran missionaries in establishing that faith's foundation in Illinois during the 1820s and 1830s. Moreover, they have considered Lutheranism synonymous with the German and Scandinavian immigrants who thronged to Illinois later in the century.[1] Many parishes existing today did indeed originate with those later immigrants, but the state's oldest Lutheran churches have a history conforming more closely to the traditional frontier image.

It all began in 1807, when Jacob Lingle and a pioneer band of German-speaking Lutherans trekked overland from the

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[1] References to Lutherans are scarce in general works on Illinois history, and when citations do appear they are all to European immigrants. Theodore C. Pease, *The Frontier State, 1818–1848*, Centennial History of Illinois, Vol. 2 (Springfield: Illinois Centennial Commission, 1918), p. 424, cites the "influx of German and Scandinavian immigration in the forties," and he is the only general author consulted who mentions organization of the Illinois Synod in 1846. The same author, in *The Story of Illinois* (1925; rpt. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 92–97, covers religion on the Illinois frontier. He does go beyond the traditional approach to Methodist and Baptist activity by including the work of Episcopalians (who had fewer churches than the Lutherans) and Congregationalists (who were about the same size) without even including the word Lutheran! R. Carlyle Buley, *The Old Northwest: Pioneer Period, 1815–1840* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1951), II, 485, associates Lutherans with German immigrants, and the only concentration mentioned in Illinois is around Belleville. In a more recent period, Robert P. Howard, *Illinois: A History of the Prairie State* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 181, 284, also considers that "Lutherans became important after the German and Scandinavian emigration of the 1840's but, like the Episcopalians, did not reach the numerical importance of the Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians." Richard J. Jensen, *Illinois: A Bicentennial History* (New York: Norton, 1978), pp. 38, 49, 55, 74–75, 113, 115, 159, 173, recounts the tug-of-war between traditionalists and modernizers but considers Lutherans primarily as traditional German immigrants and refers specifically

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North Carolina piedmont to the rolling upland of Union County, Illinois.[2] Those hardy individuals were descendants of the Pennsylvania Germans who methodically moved down from Virginia's Shenandoah Valley and by 1800 had fully occupied the Carolina piedmont.[3] Restless energies of young and old alike could not be suppressed as declining soil fertility, low prices for cotton, and lack of internal improvements combined to increase the lure of greener pastures in the "Far West." Emigration became a matter of hot debate in the North Carolina press. Although some editors warned that the troubles of the West might be even greater than those at home, it seemed clear that thousands of "wealthy and respectable" citizens were moving west annually, "literally driven away by the prospect of poverty." During the next thirty years the out-migration from North Carolina steadily increased from a trickle to a constantly flowing stream, and by 1830 another outpost from that state took root in Montgomery County, Illinois, centering around present-day Hillsboro. Still other Lutherans began coming to Illinois directly from Pennsylvania. It became increasingly difficult for the organized church in the East to keep pace with the swiftly moving frontier tide.[4]

For the Lutheran church, the migration posed a special problem. One nineteenth-century historian observed that the North Carolina church "suffered greatly" from the migrations. The Illinois-bound pioneers posed a "fearful drain" on church resources, largely because the entire Lutheran population of the country was so small. In 1807, there were only three synods on American soil—Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina. The last was the youngest, claiming fewer than a dozen ordained ministers, each of whom served several congregations.[5]

Within a decade after the start of the Lutheran influx into Illinois, the Union County settlers had established St. John's Church at present-day Dongola, near Jonesboro. The church was organized in 1816 by a "Reverend Murrets" (possibly the missionary Christian Moretz), who served his flock as a part-time minister and teacher for two years.[6]

Meeting in the homes and barns of parishioners, the fledgling congregation

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only to the Missouri Synod. None of these books discuss in any way the pioneering work performed by the American-born German Lutherans from North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

Denominational historians have contributed most to our understanding of pioneer Lutherans in Illinois, but even those accounts are incomplete.

[2] William J. Boatman, "Our Southern Conference and its Antecedents: A Brief History of the Southern Conference of the Illinois Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America," TS (1962), p. 1, copy in author's collection. In another work, Boatman indicates: "Some had come to this new land because of being opposed to slavery. They were attracted to Union county because the hilly land resembled their native North Carolina" ("The Sesquicentennial History of St. John's Lutheran Church near Dongola, Union County: Illinois' Oldest Lutheran Congregation," TS [1966], p. 1, copy in author's collection). Boatman's source was oral tradition, as supplied by Ira Karraker of Jonesboro and Charles Eddleman of Anna (author's interview with Boatman, Oct., 1973).

[3] Robert W. Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747–1762* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), pp. 146–51; Carl Hammer, Jr., *Rhinelanders on the Yadkin: The Story of the Pennsylvania Germans in Rowan and Cabarrus Counties, North Carolina* (Salisbury, N.C.: Rowan Printing Co., 1943), pp. 26–29, 35–56.

[4] *Raleigh Register and North Carolina Gazette*, April 29, 1834; *Fayetteville* (N.C.) *Observer*, May 22, 1832; *Western Carolinian* (Salisbury, N.C.), Feb. 27, 1827; William H. Hoyt, ed., *The Papers of Archibald D. Murphey* (Raleigh, N.C.: E. M. Uzzell & Co., 1914), II, 20.

[5] G. D. Bernheim, *History of the German Settlements and of the Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Book Store, 1872), pp. 358, 393.

[6] Moretz is known to have been a pastor in Tennessee and is identified as a missionary to Missouri, Kentucky, and Indiana from 1823 to 1835. See North Carolina Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, *Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers, North Carolina and Tennessee Synods, 1773–1965* (Columbia, S.C.: State Printing Co., 1966), p. 144 (hereafter cited as *Life Sketches*); Boatman, "History of St. John's," p. 1.

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petitioned the North Carolina Synod for a full-time pastor in 1818. Shortly thereafter, Reverend John Ludwig Markert, another itinerant missionary, arrived to serve the Illinois Lutherans. The pulpit was vacant once more in 1825, when forty-three Union County Lutherans petitioned their former neighbors at St. John's Church in Cabarrus County, North Carolina, for a pastor fluent in both English and German.[7]

Reverend William Jenkins, a missionary who was already serving as pastor for at least ten congregations in Tennessee, responded to the call. His visits to Illinois were obviously short, however, for by 1827 the Union County settlers—now identifying themselves as "three congregations"—sent another petition to the synodical meeting. Describing their condition as "destitute," they requested a visit from the synod's premier missionary, Jacob Scherer, who had made great progress in Ohio. Their second choice was for a supply missionary, whom they pledged to support adequately. The Synod responded that it was "impracticable" for Scherer to make the trip, and instead dispatched a licentiate, John C. A. Schoenberg, to visit Illinois immediately and to locate there permanently if possible. Ten dollars was appropriated from the synodical treasury to help defray his traveling expenses.[8]

Schoenberg left for Jonesboro in 1827 but returned to North Carolina the following year for his ordination. He reported to the Synod that the scattered Illinois congregations were "in a desolate condition," with members straying into the folds of other churches. Hundreds of Lutherans dotted the Illinois frontier, he reported, but they were "entirely destitute of preaching by our ministers, and in some places . . . congregations imperfectly organized . . . extend their hands toward us saying, 'Come over into Macedonia and help us.'" He concluded, "How painful it is that we must turn away from such urgent calls with a sorrowful heart, unable to supply them with the bread of life."[9]

The financial drain of serving mission churches was not unique to the North Carolina Synod. The *Lutheran Intelligencer*, published by the Maryland and Virginia Synod, frequently carried appeals for funds. Editor David F. Schaeffer appealed to both the heart strings and the denominational pride of his readers when he wrote: "Have not some of us acquaintances, friends and perhaps even children who have migrated to the west. . . . [C]an we see them remain destitute of the blessings we so richly enjoy . . . and remain indifferent? Can we behold other denominations embarking in the good cause . . . and we who are of the most ancient Protestant church and the followers of the immortal Luther, remain idle spectators?"[10] Even such emotional pleas, however, frequently fell upon deaf ears or empty purses.

The response of the North Carolina Synod to the challenge of the West was the Evangelical Lutheran Missionary Society

[7] Markert's biography refers to him as the first missionary of the North Carolina Synod to Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois after the creation of the Tennessee Synod in 1829; he was also first president of the Indiana Synod in 1848. *Life Sketches*, pp. 127–28; Bernheim, p. 471.

[8] The work of Jenkins was primarily in Tennessee. Although his *Life Sketches* biography does not mention missionary work in Illinois, he is known to have been a founder of the Synod of the West in 1835. *Life Sketches*, pp. 99–100; Bernheim, p. 473; Edmund Jacob Wolf, *The Lutherans in America* (New York: J. A. Hill & Co., 1890), p. 361; *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, North-Carolina and Adjacent States . . . 1827* (Salisbury, N.C.: Philo White, 1827), p. 10.

[9] *Evangelical Lutheran Intelligencer* (Frederick, Md.), Aug., 1828, p. 133 (hereafter cited as *Lutheran Intelligencer*); *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North-Carolina . . . 1828* (Salisbury, N.C.: Philo White, 1828), p. 14; *Life Sketches*, p. 186.

[10] *Lutheran Intelligencer*, Aug., 1828, p. 134.

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of North Carolina and Adjacent States, organized on May 6, 1828. Reverend Daniel Scherer, younger brother of Jacob Scherer and pastor of St. John's Church in Cabarrus County, was chosen treasurer. His report for 1829 noted the resignation of Schoenberg because of ill health and reminded his fellow ministers: "If we, whom God has blessed with Ministers and Churches, do our duty, we shall be enabled . . . to procure a Missionary, well qualified and willing to labour among our destitute brethren."[11]

In May, 1830, the Synod presented the missionary group with a letter from the Union County churches "stating their forlorn and destitute condition" and praying that "they may be speedily supplied with a minister." Unable to comply with the request, the society at first recommended that the Illinois Lutherans petition another synod.[12] Before adjourning, however, the delegates found a "well qualified and willing" laborer—Scherer himself—who set out for Illinois in order to "collect all the missionary information possible" about the young state.[13] The resulting seventeen-hundred-mile trip on horseback, which enabled Scherer to preach to scattered Lutherans in Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois, deeply influenced the course of Scherer's career as well as the future of Lutheranism in Illinois. His report of that trip has not survived, but correspondence from a Hillsboro, Illinois, Lutheran indicates that the tour was a success. Moreover, Scherer brought with him mail from Cabarrus County relatives and was perhaps even accompanied by Carolinians who wished to join relatives in Illinois.[14]

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[11] Born in Guilford County, N.C., in 1790, Daniel Scherer was ordained by the North Carolina Synod in 1821. For more on his early services to the church, see *Life Sketches*, p. 183; *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North-Carolina . . . 1828*, pp. 6–8, 12; *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North-Carolina . . . 1830* (Salisbury, N.C.: Jones and Craige, 1830), pp. 8, 17. The quotation is from *Lutheran Intelligencer*, Jan., 1830, pp. 325–26.

[12] *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North-Carolina . . . 1830*, p. 8.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[14] *Extract from the Minutes of the Evangel. Lutheran Synod of North-Carolina . . . 1831* (Salem, N.C.: John C. Blum, 1831), p. 16. Joseph Cress, a North Carolinian living in Hillsboro, Ill., recorded his pleasure with that missionary visit and noted that Scherer safely delivered money entrusted to him. Cress advised his relatives at home that when Scherer returned to North Carolina he could truthfully describe the land in Montgomery County better than the writer could "with pen and ink." Scherer was apparently accompanied by Jacob Goodman and Philip File, who were probably considering a move to the West. Joseph Cress to Moses Cress [1831–1832?], Ludwick-Ritchie Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill; the letters were published in James W. Patton, ed., "Letters from North Carolina Emigrants in the Old Northwest, 1830–1834," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 47 (1960), 263–77.

Scherer's exact route is unknown, but other accounts provide some idea of the roads used by North Carolinians migrating to the Hillsboro area. In 1836 Henry Bost left Cabarrus County on Sept. 1 and arrived in Hillsboro on Oct. 12. He passed through Lincoln and Rutherford, N.C., crossed the Blue Ridge at Hickory Gap, and came through Kentucky by way of Been's Station and Crab Orchard to Louisville. From there the trail passed through Orleans and Terre Haute, Ind.; in Illinois the towns mentioned are Paris, Charleston, and Shelbyville. "The Blackwelders and Allied Families of North Carolina and Illinois," TS (n.d.), Bost Family Section, p. 9, copy in author's collection. James Lazenby followed much the same route in 1835. He paid for ferries on the Nolichucky and Holston rivers, passed a toll gate at Cumberland Mountain, had his horses shod at Mt. Vernon, Ky., ferried across the Ohio, paid for a toll bridge over the Blue River and a ferry across the White River (both in Indiana), and finally took a ferry across the "embrox" (Embarras) River, probably near Charleston (reprinted in Walter R. Sanders, *Early Settlers of Montgomery County, Illinois* [n.p., n.d.], Vol. II, p. 138. The Bost and Lazenby routes are rather similar in comparison to that outlined by Joseph Cress, who recommended going from Concord, N.C., to Morganton and the Swannanoa Gap, across the Nolichucky and Clinch rivers, and through Hartsville and Gallatin, Tenn., and Russellville, Ky. Once across the Ohio at Shawneetown, he followed the road to Carlyle, Greenville, and Hillsboro (Cress to Daniel F. Ludewick, April 11, 1830, Ludwick-Ritchie Papers). Ezra Keller, "Historical Sketch of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hillsboro, Illinois," TS (1942), p. 3, copy in author's collection.

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In 1832, the forty-two-year-old Scherer moved permanently to Illinois, taking with him his wife Rachel and several children. He apparently considered the move beneficial to his health as well as to the church, for he complained that he suffered "much bodily indisposition" and hoped to regain his health in Illinois. Following a six-week, seven-hundred-mile trip, he and his family arrived in Hillsboro on April 27, 1832. By December he considered his condition much improved, and he noted that "I have succeeded as well as could be expected . . . where there was neither building nor congregation." Within two weeks of his arrival, thirty-five members created a congregation and resolved to build a church. The minutes of the 1834 North Carolina Synod recognized his success in organizing "a new and flourishing congregation in Hillsborough, Illinois."[15]

Scherer's accounts of his Illinois work were published in the *Lutheran Observer*. He noted that, since Schoenberg's departure, Union County was "awfully destitute of the preached gospel." "A considerable portion of my time," he wrote, "has been devoted to missionating in the Southern part of this state; and in preaching to those congregations already formed, who have petitioned our Synods for ministerial aid."[16]

By 1835 the cry of the West, as heard through the columns of the *Observer*, increased in volume. Information supplied by a "brother now living in Illinois" gave interesting descriptions of the Union County churches. The writer estimated their strength at 150 members, and he noted significantly that "*German preaching*, is not altogether indispensable; but very desirable, with the old members." The Jonesboro Lutherans preferred married ministers and seemed willing to furnish both an adequate salary and "other family necessaries."[17]

Another correspondent advised that missionaries to the "Far West" should be fluent in German "because our church is German, and it will therefore be expected of them. It is a shame for a Lutheran minister not to be able to speak the language of his Fathers. . . . [T]here are many congregations where it is absolutely necessary to preach German as they do not understand English."[18]

An eastern correspondent correctly perceived two needy Lutheran groups in the West: the "emigrants from our revered *Vater-land*" and the "multiplying thousands annually removing from our midst to the distant South and West." Both groups needed much more help from the older synods than they were receiving. He concluded that the eastern congregations had given "so little that we may well blush to make it known."[19]

Those published letters offer a valuable glimpse into the mind of frontier Lutherans struggling to preserve their faith against ignorance, indifference, and defection. Judging from the number of letters printed in the *Observer*, it is quite likely that a steady stream of complaints—as well as cries for help—were arriving from western settlements. The editor pointed out that many Lutherans, "with great reluctance," had said farewell "to the much loved church of their fathers" and had joined

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[15] *Lutheran Observer* (Baltimore), Feb. 1, 1833, p. 102; *Proceedings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North Carolina . . . 1834* (Salisbury, N.C.: Western Carolinian Office, 1834), p. 7. Scherer's date of arrival is confirmed in a letter dated May 10, 1832: "Rev. Daniel Sharrer arrived here on the 27th of April and on the first Sunday in May I heard him deliver a sermon to a large assembly in Hillsborough." Seven months later, after the death of young Edward Lippert, Scherer "done a full fatherly duty . . . [and] preached a beautiful sermon for him" (Daniel F. Ludewick to Henry Ludewick, May 10 and Dec. 8, 1832, Ludwick-Ritchie Papers).

[16] *Lutheran Observer*, Feb. 1, 1833, p. 102.

[17] *Ibid.*, Feb. 20, 1835, p. 102.

[18] *Ibid.*, Aug. 7, 1835, p. 198.

[19] *Ibid.*, April 10, 1835, p. 127.

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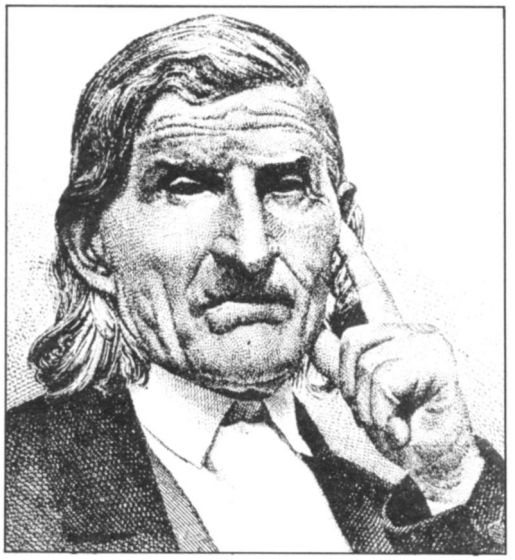

John Christian Frederick Heyer left his congregation in Somerset, Pennsylvania, to serve the scattered Germans in the West. Following his service in Illinois, the Lutheran Foreign Missions sent him to India, where he established a permanent mission.

other denominations. A western layman noted that "Lutherans were sleeping" while Methodists zealously "gave their money and labors to the supply of the destitute." Another writer from the same area wondered if Lutherans had "less love for their distant brethren, less attachment for their church and less active benevolence" than other churches. "It would seem as if they have," he concluded.[20]

An 1835 letter, signed "Sophronius," claimed that eastern Lutherans, who enjoyed "all the spiritual comforts of christianity," could "form no adequate idea of the moral waste that extends itself among multitudes of our Lutheran brethren" in the West. He noted that there was already "a considerable number of churches, built by Lutheran emigrants . . . from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina, some 10, 15, or 20 years ago, [who] pitched their tents amidst [the] heavy timbers" along the banks of the Wabash and Sangamon rivers. The writer also pointed out that the settlements were visited "occasionally" by ministers from North Carolina.[21]

Through the 1830s, the Pennsylvania Synod developed a deeper missionary interest in Illinois than the North Carolinians had been able to do. In 1835 Reverend Henry Haverstick of Philadelphia began a tour, but few details of his journey survive.[22] Following on his heels in the winter of 1835–1836 came Reverend John Christian Frederick Heyer, who left his congregation in Somerset, Pennsylvania, to tour the West for the Central Missionary Society of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States. Heyer wrote to the society secretary, Reverend Samuel Schmucker, that his objective was to spend six months exploring the West "including Jonesboro, Union county, and such other portions of the country as you have reason to believe, abound in Germans, who might be formed into churches." Heyer was instructed to collect money for the mission society and to apply the donations to his salary. "Possibly you may meet with some rich and pious individuals," he was told, "who will do something clever for the cause of the Redeemer."[23]

Heyer left home on December 30, 1835. Because of muddy roads he opted for a steamboat to Cincinnati. From there he traveled to Louisville and then to Corydon, Indiana, where he "proceeded mostly on by-roads, to shun the mud, and through thinly settled parts of Indiana, to the

[20] *Ibid.*, May 8, 1835, p. 148.
[21] *Ibid.*, May 15, 1835, p. 1.
[22] Boatman, "Our Southern Conference," p. 2.
[23] *Lutheran Observer*, Dec. 4, 1835, p. 3.

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Wabash river," where he arrived on January 23, 1836.[24] Pastor Heyer was undoubtedly aware of a detailed study of the nearby Lutheran settlements that was earlier published in the *Observer* by a non-Lutheran from Lawrenceville who described himself as "a watchman on one of the outposts of Zion."

> In Wabash Co., which borders this on the South, there is a considerable German population, which is annually increasing by emigration; and at present there is a prospect of a very large accession to their number. There are now about 15 or 20 families, embracing, probably 120 individuals. They are separated into three settlements; at Mt. Carmel, which is the seat of Justice of the County; Coffy settlement, which is five miles South; and Long Prairie, which is ten miles west of Carmel. They are generally, if not all, of the Lutheran order, and perhaps about 12 or 15 of their number have been admitted as regular members in that communion. As they have no preacher of their own order, and as they are mostly inaccessible to those of any other[,] they may be regarded as entirely destitute of the public ordinances of the Gospel.[25]

On the day following his arrival, Heyer preached to twenty-five German families at Mt. Carmel and spent the next three days in the German settlement of Lancaster, twelve miles away. He observed that many of the Lutherans in Wabash County were from Pennsylvania, and Heyer told his host "he felt himself at home, and had not felt so since he left *Old Pennsylvania!*"[26]

From that region he moved on to Union County, arriving in the "German settlement" at Jonesboro on February 14. He easily found the two established congregations and estimated their numbers at 150 to 200 German families "principally from North Carolina, . . . most of them professedly Lutherans." He immediately learned that "Br. D. Sherer, who resides in Hillsboro, Montgomery County, at a distance of 150 miles," visited the area during the preceeding years. "Owing in a great measure to the laborious and self-denying exertions of Brother Sherer," Heyer reported, "the flock in Union County has not been altogether scattered." Although Heyer refused to comment specifically on the rigors of his trip, he did admit: "It requires an excellent constitution and an enthusiastic zeal to persevere in an undertaking of this kind." He concluded that married pastors should not be sent to the West "unless they intend farming. The stations are too weak to support a man with a family."[27] After leaving southern Illinois in early March, Heyer rode toward Hillsboro. Arriving there on the thirteenth, he found Daniel Scherer, "at present the only resident Lutheran Minister in the state of Illinois," and commented upon the "large two-story frame meeting-house" that the congregation was building. His subsequent trip to Sangamon County was slowed by high waters and bad roads. Once there he searched unsuccessfully for the Pennsylvania German colony mentioned in John Mason Peck's Illinois gazetteer. Nevertheless, Heyer was "kindly received" into the cabin of "an old Kentuckian," where he held an English worship service for the neighbors. "There appeared to be no need of German preaching," he noted. "A Lutheran preacher in this county appeared to be a novelty; but very few had ever heard a minister of that denomination." He left for Beardstown on March 21 and there found about two hundred Germans, mostly immigrants. By March 25 he

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[24] *Ibid.*, March 18, 1836, p. 2.

[25] *Ibid.*, May 15, 1835, p. 150. He noted also "a German settlement in this state located in Union Co., distant about 150 miles S.W. from this place. Respecting them *I* know but little; and perhaps 'no man careth for their souls.' I hope that your Synod will search them out."

[26] *Ibid.*, Feb. 19 (p. 102), March 18 (p. 2), 1836.

[27] Heyer also mentioned that several Indiana pastors depended on farming for their main support. *Ibid.*, March 18 (p. 2), April 15 (p. 134), May 6 (p. 146), July 29 (p. 193), 1836.

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was in Peoria and soon crossed again to the east bank of the Illinois River.[28]

On March 29, Heyer arrived in the Pekin area and ministered "to a few Lutheran families who had been living in Tazewell County, for five years, without hearing or seeing a minister of their Church." By April 9 he was back in Union County, preparing for a six-day trek in Missouri. He returned to the Jonesboro area on April 15, stayed for a few days, and then rode to Mt. Carmel, where he wrote, "In justice to myself and horse, I must rest a few days." His records indicate that in April alone he "travelled more than 600 miles, preached 14 or 15 times, baptised 13 and administered the Lord's Supper to more than 100 communicants." But he concluded sadly: "Unless some of our young brethren can be induced to come to the West and take charge of these new congregations, it cannot be expected that our cause will prosper." The one bright spot was Daniel Scherer, who was "willing to spend two or three months during the summer, as Missionary in the middle and upper counties." Heyer emphasized that the Pennsylvania committee "could not find anyone [more] conveniently situated" than Scherer.[29]

During the following winter, Reverend Ezra Keller undertook a similar fact-finding trip for the missionary society of Gettysburg Seminary. He too passionately pleaded for an end to western neglect. "Our German brethren are fast declining in piety and morality," he warned. "The weeds of wickedness are springing up in every form and in frightful numbers. . . . Who will go to feed these lambs?" Keller predicted that new pastors in the West would be handicapped because settlements were so widely scattered. The outreach work in the West was further hampered because missionaries were "not so much respected as in the East," since imposters often disgraced the Christian ministry. The western missionary must therefore "first show to the people his private character to remove their suspicions and gain their confidence."[30]

"Ahmish Baptists" living northeast of Peoria were the first Germans encountered by Keller in Illinois. During a six-day stay in that area he also located eighty-five Lutherans whose hunger for the gospel dispelled the suffering of his journey. Fourteen miles away he visited people who "had not heard a sermon since they are in this country." On the Mackinaw River outside of Pekin (where "wickedness prevails"), he found the German community visited by Heyer the previous winter. Keller's plan to continue northward to "Attoway" and "Heniken" (Ottawa and Hennepin) was thwarted by impassable roads and ice on the Illinois River.[31]

Turning south, he arrived in Beardstown, where he was pleased to find a recently arrived German-speaking pastor. Keller preached there in both German and English, noting that the services were "tolerably well attended—but scarcely as well as the slaughter-house. . . . [T]here were about 400 hogs slaughtered here yesterday." Furthermore, in a town already famous for the amount of pork processed each winter, the workers received "twenty-five cents more on the Sabbath than on other days." And thus, he noted, "for twenty-five cents they profane the holy day of the Lord."[32]

Travel through Illinois was never easy in the 1830s and, according to Keller's account, winter only added to the misery.

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[28] *Ibid.*, May 6, 1836, p. 146. John Mason Peck's description of the town of Germany is in *A Gazetteer of Illinois in Three Parts* (Jacksonville, Ill.: R. Goudy, 1834), p. 243.

[29] *Lutheran Observer*, June 10, 1836, p. 166.

[30] *Ibid.*, March 17, 1837, p. 117.

[31] *Ibid.*, March 24, 1837, p. 121.

[32] *Ibid.*

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After graduating from Gettysburg College in 1835, Ezra Keller set out as an itinerant missionary in the western states. He later returned East, becoming founder and first president of Wittenberg College in Springfield, Ohio.

Yet, "in the cause of Christ," he wrote, "toils become delightful and suffering sweet to the soul of the Christian." His trials included not only "travel alone through mud, and snow and ice and rain," but "the piercing winds of the prairies when the mercury . . . is below zero." To cross large rivers on thin ice or "to swim one's horse across rapid streams" were things "unpleasant to the flesh and trying to the spirit," but for Keller an even greater hardship was seeing settlements "entirely destitute of preaching . . . children growing under the destructive influence of bad example and without any religious instruction." "To preach to such people awhile," he wrote, "ascertain their wants and then leave them, as sheep without a shepherd, is a trial which my spirit can scarcely endure." The other side of the coin was equally discouraging. In 1838 the Synod of the West complained that missionary tours merely raised settlers' hopes without fulfilling them.[33]

Lest any eastern pastor venture West expecting too much, Keller warned of the "privations and hardships" of daily life, including "the taunts of mockers and the inveterate suspicions of good people who have been imposed upon and deceived by wicked men." Moreover, the higher standard of living in the East stood in stark contrast to that of the West, where kitchen, parlor, dining room, and study were likely to be lodged in "a cabin 15 feet by 20, the whole one apartment."[34]

In 1838 a fourth Pennsylvanian, Daniel Kohler, traveled through Illinois.

[33] *Ibid.*, March 24, 1837, p. 121; Dec. 7, 1838, p. 2.
[34] *Ibid.*, April 28, 1837, p. 141.

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Although he was unique in that he preached only in German, his findings were virtually identical to those of previous investigators. Upon his return, Kohler gave an "interesting report" to the Society of the East Pennsylvania Synod for the Propagation of the Gospel. He recommended that the Gettysburg Missionary Society send the West single men prepared to forego conveniences common in the East, and he expressed his conviction that "if some of our German and English members . . . in Pennsylvania and Maryland, could only see the condition of the church in the West, they would aid more." Kohler's efforts as "itinerant preacher" were appreciated by residents of Wabash County, who sent a letter of thanks to the Pennsylvania Synod and asked that Kohler be returned to Jordan Creek (now Lancaster) as a full-time missionary. He was not reappointed, however.[35]

Throughout the reports of Illinois missionaries there was an emphasis on serving the so-called Germans of the West, both immigrants and the descendants of Germans from the eastern states. That was especially true in Wabash County. Thomas S. Hinde, a Methodist minister in Mt. Carmel and one of the town's founders in 1817, sent several letters over the signature "T. S. H." regarding the lack of preachers for "the German population of this region of the country and the descendants of Germans." J. F. Youngken of Mt. Carmel pointed out in 1835 that many of the Pennsylvania-born emigrants were "principally German" and tenaciously retained their language, rarely attending an English service. "A Lutheran in the West" writing from the same place in 1836 complained, "The Germans . . . resident in this county . . . are destitute of the ordinary means of grace in their own language." Still another writer, Edward B. Olmstead, a Lutheran preacher in Union County, observed of the Germans in Wabash County: "[I]f they ever be attended to, it must be by a [Lutheran]. . . . [Many church members] are not *familiar* with the English language, and some . . . are entirely unacquainted with it."[36] A letter from "A Number of Lutherans" of Wabash County called for "an efficient, pious and experienced shepherd, to exhort and instruct" in German as well as English. Scherer also echoed the need for "men who can speak the German."[37]

The missionary pastor was concerned

[35] *Ibid.*, June 1 (p. 3), Oct. 19 (p. 3), Nov. 9 (p. 1), 1838.

[36] *Lutheran Observer*, April 3 (p. 126), May 15 (p. 150), Dec. 4 (p. 58), 1835; March 11 (p. 115), March 18 (p. 118), 1836; Jan. 11, 1839, p. 3; June 12, 1840, p. 3.

According to Boatman ("Our Southern Conference," pp. 3, 8), Rev. Edward B. Olmstead lived in Union County before his 1839 ordination and served there as pastor from 1843 to 1847. A slightly different version can be pieced together from items in the *Lutheran Observer*. Daniel Scherer advised the 1838 Synod of the West that "brother Olmstead," who had then applied for a preaching license, "be requested to take charge of" the two Union County congregations, who were then without a preacher (Dec. 7, 1838, p. 2). A similar story was related by Olmstead (whose initials were erroneously expressed as "C. B. O."): "I attended the meeting of the Synod . . . was licensed, and directed to visit the congregations. . . . The result of my mission was, that they elected me their pastor. [He then returned to Indiana by way of Vincennes, presumably gathered his personal property, and came back to Illinois via the Ohio River.] . . . On the 13th [of December] I landed at Caledonia—proceeded to Jonesboro', and entered on the duties of my station (*ibid.*, and Jan. 11, 1839, p. 3). Thus, by his own account, Olmstead began his Illinois ministry in the autumn of 1838; Boatman's claim of an 1843 date, probably based on oral tradition, is incorrect. Olmstead's name also appears among pastors in the 1842 listing of the Synod of the West (*Journal of the Eighth Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the West* . . . [Springfield, Ill.: Ballard & Roberts, 1842], p. 5). The name of Caledonia was changed to Olmstead in 1876; James N. Adams, comp., William E. Keller, ed., *Illinois Place Names* (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1969), p. 309.

[37] *Lutheran Observer*, Jan. 10, 1840, p. 3; Scherer to Francis Springer, Jan. 28, 1847, Box 1, "Papers, 1836–1849" folder, Francis Springer Papers, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield (all Springer letters hereafter cited are from this folder).

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about both groups. Foreign immigration also posed an acute problem for the frontier Lutheran church. The editor of the *Observer* wrote of his deep interest in "the welfare of our brethren . . . who have fled from foreign persecution and oppression, [and] have sought a home in the far West, where they may worship God according to the custom of their fathers and the dictates of their conscience." He feared that the newcomers would "be scattered and lost" without a spiritual guide. "Can our brethren of the ministry any longer turn a deaf ear to this important call?" he challenged. "Is there not *even one*, who is willing to devote himself to the interests of the church in the Far West."[38]

Indeed, through the decade of the 1830s the Illinois Lutherans did have the unswerving services of one dedicated pastor—Daniel Scherer, who organized the church at Hillsboro and served there for ten years before relocating at Mt. Carmel. Scherer's name must surely head the list of early Illinois Lutheran pastors.

The fourth son of a prominent North Carolina German family, Scherer approached his missionary task in Illinois with zeal and energy. Almost immediately after arriving in Hillsboro in 1832, he made the long trek down to Union County in order to preach to the North Carolinians at Jonesboro. There he "commenced to instruct some of their young people, many of whom have grown up in ignorance." He found that others had "attached themselves to other denominations, while some are still waiting for an opportunity to have the bread of life broke unto them in their mother church; and there drink the pure milk of the Gospel."[39]

Scherer traveled from Hillsboro to Jonesboro every three months but eventually found the work too much for one man. By 1834 there were several congregations in Union County, all with "most flattering" prospects but suffering from the lack of "an industrious and faithful minister." Scherer was greatly disappointed that no pastor could be persuaded to shepherd those large parishes, which he feared would soon "be beyond recovery, having almost despaired of procuring a minister." He rapidly realized he could not serve both Hillsboro and Jonesboro effectively because the "great distance, together with other circumstances," rendered it impossible to afford them "any satisfactory service."[40]

Resident clergymen, however, could seemingly not be procurred without adequate financial support. Eastern churches contributed very little money, and cash was equally scarce in Illinois, particularly after the onset of the Panic of 1837. In order to build up God's Kingdom in the West, Pastor Scherer solicited help from his fellow Lutherans through the columns of the *Lutheran Observer*. In 1836 he requested aid to finish constructing the Hillsboro meetinghouse and to make it "comfortable in this cold country in the winter season." He later acknowledged receiving more than fifty dollars from two large parishes he had previously served in North Carolina.[41] Typically, however, the concern of this dedicated pastor extended beyond his immediate surroundings. In 1833, only a year after arriving in Illinois, Scherer sent a donation of ten dollars to Gettysburg Seminary for needy students; three years

[38] *Lutheran Observer*, June 26, 1840, p. 2.

[39] *Ibid.*, Feb. 1, 1833, p. 102; Boatman, "History of St. John's," p. 2. The genealogy of the family can be found in Sanders, *The Scherer Family of Montgomery County, Illinois* (Litchfield: Walter R. Sanders, 1945). A Kentucky pastor traveling through Illinois reported being "cordially received by . . . Rev. D. Scherer, and his interesting family," but the writer's definition of an "interesting family" is, unhappily, not included (*Lutheran Observer*, Nov. 8, 1839, p. 3).

[40] *Lutheran Observer*, Feb. 1, 1833, p. 102, Nov. 21, 1834, p. 50.

[41] *Ibid.*, July 1 (p. 179), Nov. 11 (p. 47), 1836.

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later his Hillsboro congregation contributed five dollars to the missionary work of Reverend Haverstick; and in 1837 Scherer offered twenty-five dollars to foreign missions whenever one hundred other persons or congregations obligated themselves to pay a similar amount.[42]

In spite of inadequate finances and poor traveling conditions, Scherer valiantly attempted to retain a personal link with the organizational structure of his denomination. Although unable to attend the charter meeting of the new Synod of the West in 1834, he sent a letter expressing his good wishes. His fellow pastors there recognized his activities in Hillsboro and expressed pleasure at learning "a new church has lately been built . . . and that the congregation is in quite a flourishing condition." Meanwhile, the North Carolina Synodical meeting for 1834—which Scherer also failed to attend because of "family circumstances"—expressed its "approbation of the laudable efforts" of the Illinois missionary and admitted his Hillsboro congregation "into connexion with this Synod" as requested. In 1835, Scherer asked to have his name added to the roster of the Synod of the West, and the following year he was granted, at his own request, an honorable dismissal from the North Carolina Synod.[43]

Having cast his lot permanently with the West, Scherer remained committed to ministering to all German-speaking Protestants in the state. The flood of German immigrants from Europe increased throughout the decade and brought new challenges to the pioneer church. To the dismay of Scherer and others, many of the newcomers not only preferred a German pastor but were not willing to worship with American congregations. When invited to attend English services, one immigrant had replied: "We are Germans, we cannot understand your language—we have been confirmed in that language—we have surrounded the altar and partaken of a Savior's love in that language, and want preaching in that same language."[44] Even more discouraging, the few German missionary pastors who accompanied their parishioners to America seemed uninterested in affiliating with their American-born counterparts. When members of the Synod of the West issued a special invitation to German-speaking ministers in Illinois and Missouri, the response was discouraging. Scherer observed that "the larger number of these brethren have but little inclination to attach themselves to any Lutheran Synod. . . . [T]hey belong to the 'Evangelical United Church of Europe' . . . [and] they are so much engaged in teaching school, and preaching the gospel to their people, that they cannot [be] absent from home so long." Scherer also spoke of the activities of Reverend George W. Wall of St. Louis, a Swiss-born missionary whose preference for the fellowship of European Zwinglians over American Lutherans led to the creation of the Evangelical Synod of North America during this era.[45]

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[42] *Ibid.*, Dec. 21, 1833, p. 124, May 6, 1836, p. 146, Feb. 10, 1837.

[43] The "family circumstances" may have been the impending birth of his daughter Rebecca Adaline, born on May 31, 1834. Sanders, *Scherer Family*, p. 52; *Proceedings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North Carolina . . . 1834* (Salisbury, N.C.: Western Carolinian Office, 1834), p. 7; *Lutheran Observer*, March 6 (p. 11), Nov. 13 (p. 47), 1835; *Proceedings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North-Carolina . . . 1835* (Salisbury, N.C.: Western Carolinian Office, 1835), p. 3; *Minutes of the Synod and Ministerium of the Evangelical Church in the State of North Carolina . . . 1836* (Salisbury, N.C.: n.p., 1836), p. 15.

[44] *Lutheran Observer*, Aug. 26, 1836, p. 2.

[45] *Ibid.*, June 26, 1840, p. 2, Dec. 7, 1838, p. 2. The history of the Evangelical Synod of North America, as well as other non-Lutheran German-speaking Protestant groups, is too involved to be included in this article. More information about Wall and the Evangelical Synod can be found in David Dunn et al., *A History of the Evangelical and Reformed Church* (Philadelphia: Christian Education Press, 1961), pp. 166–76.

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Current photograph of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church near Dongola in Union County

As Illinois grew and developed, the German element became more widespread. An 1840 report published in the *Observer* enumerates most of the early German-American settlements and notes the additional places occupied by the newly arrived Europeans. It records the areas of influence that became the oldest Illinois congregations, affiliating with the Lutheran Church of America, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and the American Lutheran Church.

> A congregation could be formed in Mocupen Co. near Carcenville [Carlinville?] and one near Shelbyville, . . . and a minister would be supported at Mt. Carmel. . . . In Union co. Ill. there are two congregations and two preaching places. In St. Clair co. there are more Germans than in any other part of the State. Bardstown [Beardstown] and vicinity are said to abound with Germans, and is an important station. Taz-[e]well county, Ill. . . . above Peoria, on the Mackinaw River, and Putnam county, west of Hemspn [Hennepin] contains many important settlements of German Lutherans. Chicago and neighborhood, in Cook co. has some Lutherans. Wabash county, with part of Lawrence and Edwards counties afford fine prospects for our church. At Quincy on the Mississippi river, [is] a church of 150 members, which is vacant.[46]

It eventually became obvious to

[46] *Lutheran Observer*, Nov. 20, 1840, p. 2. The earliest Lutheran Church in America congregations included in the observation include Mt. Carmel, Dongola, Jonesboro, and Beardstown; the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod congregations would be Staunton, Millstadt, Beardstown, Bensonville, and Quincy; and the American Lutheran Church parish is at Shelbyville. The writer mentions Chicago, but he was basically concerned with southern and central Illinois; he omitted congregations at Hillsboro, Springfield, Claremont, De Soto, Vandalia, and Chester (all Lutheran Church in America), as well as others at Columbia, Waterloo, Springfield, Red Bud, Venedy, Collinsville, New Minden, and Evansville (now Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod). All of those towns either had preaching points or contained German concentrations by 1840, and congregations were organized in each place before 1848.

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Lutheran leaders that all German-speaking Protestants did not accept the same theological tenets and could not easily be gathered together under one umbrella organization. Daniel Scherer continued to work most closely with those American-born Germans he originally came to Illinois to serve. He traveled to the Mt. Carmel area in 1840, administered the sacraments, and later urged his eastern friends to send that congregation an experienced man who could preach in both German and English, noting that the members would have long ago been lost to other denominations had it not been for the language barrier. By that time the group possessed "a comfortable little brick house of worship," as well as an eighty-acre farm for the pastor's use. Yet the Mt. Carmel Lutherans, like the congregations in Union County, remained basically leaderless.[47] Neither the North Carolina nor the Pennsylvania missionary tours resulted in the permanent establishment of Lutheran pastors on the Illinois frontier.

In 1843 Pastor Scherer moved from Hillsboro to Mt. Carmel, and he spent the last ten years of his life ministering to the scattered congregations of Wabash County.[48] His pioneering contributions to the church were recognized in 1846, when he was chosen first president of the new Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Illinois, the very creation of which reflected the growth of German-American Lutheranism in the state. His former colleagues in the North Carolina Synod, still maintaining an interest in an organization enfolding so many of its former parishioners, prayed "the blessings of God upon these brethren in their arduous labors to build up the Kingdom of Christ in the 'Far West.'"[49]

Despite Scherer's many new responsibilities and the persistent pressures of serving multiple congregations, he maintained an extensive correspondence with fellow clergymen. When a friend complained of being overworked, for example, Scherer recalled the sage advice of his North Carolina mentor: "It is better to wear out, than to rust out—I have been wearing out ever Since; and am like an old Shreaking Wagen, when rooling over roots and Rocks . . . every joint is tryed to its very utmost."[50]

Scherer's latter years in the Mt. Carmel area were not always happy ones—nor were they well provided for. In 1851, for example, he complained to a fellow clergyman that his family's well had gone dry and that none of his parishioners had offered assistance: "I toald the people, that my support here too fore had been insaficient . . . but here they look sower; and instead of increesing their Subscription some do less." The lack of financial support was not the only point of contention. He felt mortified that his Saturday confirmation classes and preparatory services for the Lord's Supper were not well attended because some parishioners preferred the local horse races.[51]

Discouraged by those attitudes, the

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[47] Despite those hardships, the Illinois Lutherans, along with the other pioneer churches of the Synod of the West, won the praise of the *Lutheran Observer*. "Probably no Lutheran Synod in the United States has increased so rapidly, nor displayed more zeal and self-denial than this little band of faithful and untiring brethren," the editor wrote (Jan. 17, 1840, p. 3). *Ibid.*, May 20, 1836, p. 153.

[48] Keller, p. 4; *Life Sketches*, p. 183. No extant documents record why Scherer moved to Mt. Carmel. As this paper has demonstrated, however, the churches of Wabash County repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, requested a permanent pastor. Henry Kramer Hennig, a Gettysburg student, was sent there by the Synod of the West but served only four months during the summer of 1842, having been granted a license on April 17. Hennig's stay was temporary because he regarded himself "incompetent to render as much service in the *German* language as the congregations at that place require,—and that those brethren expected shortly to be supplied with a minister, in pursuance of an arrangement which they had made prior to brother Hennig's visit to them" (*Journal of the Eighth Annual Convention of the Synod of the West*, pp. 10, 28).

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aging pastor considered moving out of Wabash County. Churches in Davenport and Muscatine, Iowa, were searching for an "American German" who could preach both German and English, and an assignment to Beardstown, Illinois, was likewise offered. The latter post, however, included teaching responsibilities "all the year," which Scherer said "would be death to me, never having been accustomed to such a confined life."[52] Scherer died unexpectedly before he was able to reach a decision about relocation.

By this time in his long career the hard-working frontier missionary perhaps sensed his work was coming to an end. In March, 1852, just one month before his death, the sixty-year-old Pastor Scherer summarized his Illinois years:

> Permit me to Say, that it has been our lot, as well, as our privilige, to plant the Standerd of Lutheranism in Illinois; and be the first Standerd barers of that branch of the redemers kingdom in this great valley of the Mississippi: which has caust much Labour and money. . . . I have Spint a good Wagen and 4 hourse team, and over 14 or 15 hundred dollers braught to this country with the constent Labour of myself & family for the last 19 years to build up the Church of my fathers & my choise and raise my family. And I sometimes feel as if I were redy to be afford up, as Paul said.[53]

More than a century later, the Illinois Synod of the Lutheran Church in America lauded Scherer as "the patriarch of the Lutheran church in Illinois." It further described him as "a true and warm-hearted Lutheran, an able preacher in both the German and English languages . . . [who] did an immense amount of missionary work over half the state—all 'at his own expense' . . . always on horseback, visiting our scattered people and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to them. . . . Both the Missouri Synod and the United Lutheran Church in Illinois owe a debt of gratitude to this self-sacrificing missionary, . . . [who] had to earn his living by farming, and for a while kept a store."[54]

Despite the many wearying years Scherer spent riding the Hillsboro-Jonesboro-Mt. Carmel circuit, the American roots of German Lutheranism did not reach as deeply or spread as widely as he and his contemporaries had hoped. His denomination faced two important problems not shared to the same extent by Methodists and Baptists—both of whom fare much better on the pages of Illinois religious history than do the Lutherans. First of all, Lutheran synods insisted upon some degree of theological training and doctrinal conformity, which effectively eliminated developing a completely home-grown clergy. To solve that problem Scherer struggled to establish a seminary in Illinois. Without an ordained local leadership and sufficient support from the East, thousands of Lutherans drifted from the faith of their fathers. One writer claimed that the real problem was not raising money but finding well-trained pastors. "It is plain that we have them not to

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[49] The Synod of the West was amicably dissolved in 1846 into three parts, one of which became the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Illinois. Boatman, "Our Southern Conference," p. 7. For the various synodical alignments, see Robert C. Wiederaenders and Walter G. Tillmanns, *The Synods of American Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 1968), pp. 81–82. Many of the German immigrants arriving in Illinois during the 1840s banded together to form the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod in 1847. More details about the founding of that body as well as the organization of its pioneer congregations in Illinois are found in August R. Suelflow, *The Heart of Missouri: A History of the Western District of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, 1854–1954* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954).

[50] Scherer to Springer, n.d., but marked received by Springer on April 7, 1851, Springer Papers.

[51] Scherer to Springer, Oct. 6, 1851, *ibid.*

[52] Scherer to Springer, March 2, 1852, *ibid.*

[53] *Ibid.*; Scherer died in Wabash County on April 4, 1852, and is buried there. Sanders, *Scherer Family*, p. 47.

[54] *Life Sketches*, p. 183.

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spare in this country, and even if we had, it does not follow that they would be qualified for this enterprize." The writer's specific qualifications raise an important second point. He said, "They ought either to be native Germans or able to speak the language with perfect correctness, free from all American admixture; they ought to be well educated men."[55] While the Lutherans sought "well educated men" fluent in German, the Methodists and Baptists were already busy in the field!

Thus the Lutheran church became deeply ensnarled in a web of language and ethnicity that severely hampered denominational growth. Even a cursory reading of missionary instructions, which specifically direct preachers to seek out German communities in the West, validates the accusation that Lutherans were concerned only with Germans and descendants of Germans. Why were some denominations so successful in establishing new churches on the frontier? One correspondent to the *Lutheran Observer* correctly suggested that Methodists and Presbyterians "do not stop to enquire whether there be any English or Scotch at the West, like we do whether there be any Germans, but they dispatch their men with instructions *to hew their own timber.*—Let the Lutheran church do the same[,] for the moral timber with which this Western country abounds, is as free for our use as for theirs."[56]

The language problem was further compounded by synodical allegiances and by personal, state, and nationalistic rivalries—to say nothing of the theological and liturgical disputes that divided German Protestants into conservative and moderate camps. Even Daniel Scherer, who worked so hard for a unified Lutheran church in Illinois, could still write in 1852, after an absence of twenty years from his native state, about "one of my churches in NC."[57]

In spite of such handicaps the Lutheran church did grow and prosper in Illinois before the Civil War. New congregations emerged every year during the 1840s, and most of them still exist today. They serve as a living reminder that American Lutherans actively paved the way in Illinois for the incoming flood of Old World Germans. The responsibility for laying that foundation basically rested upon the shoulders of one man. Thus, when the Illinois history textbooks now being used are revised it is hoped that—as John Mason Peck, Peter Cartwright, and Philander Chase move across the pages of the state's pioneer period organizing Baptist, Methodist and Episcopal churches—future writers will also include the untiring work of a trail-blazing American-born German Lutheran pastor, Daniel Scherer of North Carolina.

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[55] *Lutheran Observer*, Nov. 15, 1839, p. 3.
[56] *Ibid.*, Aug. 7, 1835, p. 198.
[57] Scherer to Springer, March 2, 1852, Springer Papers.

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